

say, "Miss, I don't like this," returning a toy which is apparently charming.

We had some dolls from the *Evening News* and some other toys—not new, but very nice—sent by children; but your money went to provide for those very difficult people, the big boys, and also for the girls, who were too grown-up for dolls. Now I really should like to know whether students approve of my using their money for this sort of thing, or whether they would rather it was put to a more serious use. If they preferred, I could use it to provide Christmas dinners, or keep it to convalesce a sick child, or give it to a day school boot club, or various other things. I wish I could have been at the Conference to answer any questions put to me, but I do hope that you will let me know if you think my use of the money is not a good one. For myself, I know that you cannot do anything which will give more joy to the little Hoxton children. With love to all, yours very sincerely,

MABEL CONDER.

### ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

It has been suggested that English grammar should be removed from our programmes, or given as an alternative subject to Latin, and I was asked to read a paper in favour of its retention on the programme. There seem to be two important points for consideration: (1) Why we should keep English grammar on the programme. (2) How we may overcome some of the difficulties in teaching it.

Firstly, it is important that children should have a knowledge of the history of their own language and its origin. At present, as far as I know, this most interesting part of grammar is too often taught only to pupils well advanced in the subject, those who have ploughed their way through the early stages of nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. Would it

not be possible to combine the "history part" of grammar with the technical part? It would, I feel sure, appeal to children, and help to do away with the antipathy which so many seem to feel towards grammar. At present there are two or three half-hours a week set down for English grammar in the time-table for Class III. If parsing and analysis were taken once a week, Arnold's language lessons or Gow's *Method of English* another time, then the third set time might be given to studying the *history* of our language. How the children would love to hear about the life of the early Britons, the instruments and utensils they used for cooking, etc., and then they will see that many of the words in use to-day, words relating to the house, the kitchen, and the farm, are the same as those used by those old Celts. Then the coming of the Romans, and consequently the introduction of words relating to war and conquest. Then the invasions and victories of Angles, Saxons, and Danes, and the beginning of the *English* language, followed later by the Norman Conquest bringing in French words, and so on.

Then, secondly, grammar gives children a knowledge of construction, which is a great help in composition. Analysis helps them to express themselves shortly and concisely, instead of in the rambling style natural to so many children. Of course, there is always the old argument brought forward that the children of educated parents speak and write correctly without learning English grammar. That is perfectly true in a great many cases, but not always. Only the other day I heard of a well educated man, who confessed that he did not know when to use "shall" and when "will" in conversation.

Some people, of course, say that little things like this do not matter. But if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well, and there is no doubt that it is far preferable

to hear a person speak grammatically than ungrammatically. It is, of course, with children of the upper classes that we, as a body, have to deal; still, I think it is worth while considering the children of the lower classes, and there one finds that they do not *naturally* speak and write correct English. They have to be taught, and there one sees the necessity for teaching grammar. This is important, because I think I am right in saying that Miss Mason is anxious that the curriculum of the P.U.S. should be followed in schools for all classes of children, and if the matter of expense could be satisfactorily settled, and Government could be persuaded to spend a little more money on books for the education of the poorer classes, the P.N.E.U. programme might be introduced into elementary schools to their great advantage, and if English grammar had been banished from our programme it would be a serious loss to the children taught in these schools.

Thirdly, without a knowledge of English grammar, how can we teach the grammars of foreign languages? Surely it is quite hopeless to take up Larousse's Grammaire with the intention of teaching children (for example) that nouns in "al" form their plural by changing *al* into *aux*, when the child does not know what is meant by a noun, or the difference between singular and plural. Again, and this is from actual experience, one asks a child in Class III to say the present tense, indicative mood of the verb "finir"; the answer is, "Well, really, I don't understand what you mean, which is the present tense, and what does the indicative mood mean?" If children are to learn French, German, and Latin grammar, it seems to me absolutely essential that they should learn English grammar to combine with them.

Fourthly, and perhaps this is the most important point, English grammar should be taught, because it makes the

children *think*. It affords splendid opportunity for the exercise of their reasoning power. For example, and to show more fully what I mean—suppose a child is parsing a noun—he *reasons* in his mind that the noun in question is plural number because it speaks of more than one; or that, because the said noun is the subject of the sentence, *therefore* it must be in the nominative case, and so on. Then analysis encourages the habit of clear, ordered, and methodical thinking. A child has a sentence to analyse, to pull to pieces, arranging each word or group of words in its proper place. This cannot be done mechanically, but demands real and steady thinking, and thus helps to form a habit of inestimable value to the child. The mind of the child must work, there must be a real mental effort. (I therefore recommend grammar to children who are mentally lazy!) History and geography may be studied to a certain extent without actual *thinking* on the part of the child. Now, in a subject like grammar this is quite impossible. Grammar, of course, does not appeal to the majority of children, because it deals with *words*, and not things; and this being the case, it is always more or less of a difficulty to make grammar interesting to a child.

In parsing and analysis I find my pupil is much more interested if she has chosen her own sentence or verse. Sometimes she makes up the sentence herself, sometimes she chooses a verse from a favourite poem. This secures her interest at the start, at any rate. Of course, some children *love* grammar, and I heard only the other day of some, who take the keenest interest in it, and are quite thrilled by parsing and analysis.

Unfortunately, it seems these are in the minority, and so any suggestions as to how children may be induced to take more interest in this subject would certainly be most acceptable.

O. M. LOWE.

## DISCUSSION.

*Against the teaching of English grammar.*—The question of substituting Latin for English grammar was one much supported by the late headmaster of Wellington. He would have terms of grammar explained in the Latin lesson, because of the clumsiness of English terms. (He retired six years ago.)

*For the teaching of English grammar.*—Scott and Jones is the first Latin book set in the programme, and in it there is no regular grammar.

*Against.*—Reading and composition will correct faulty grammar, but Latin is the foundation of so many languages that through it children will have a complete view of the homogeneous character of all languages.

*For.*—Dr. David, speaking at the College of Preceptors on this subject, said that he is in favour of keeping English grammar, and that we ought to fight for its retention in the school curriculum. And Mr. Helbert, on a list of books used in his Preparatory School at Winchester, says: "An elementary knowledge of Latin is helpful, but not essential: it is *altogether undesirable* unless a boy can read English fluently, and is familiar with the English parts of speech and the elements of sentence-structure. In any case, some such books as Household's should be used *in pari passu* with the Latin."

*Against.*—On the other hand, there are preparatory and public schools where English grammar is not taken as a subject.

All grammar is one subject, the rules are all the same, adapted to the various languages. It is not a question of the value of grammar, but of consideration for a congested programme rendered still more so by the special subjects not taken in other schools. When two subjects serve the same purpose, why not compress them and make one?

*For.*—A thorough knowledge of English grammar will tend to keep the characteristics of the language; Latin does not help in peculiarities of English construction, and with words of varied meaning, such as "As."

*Against.*—The P.U.S. children have good books. They must learn English as it is used by the great masters.

*For.*—Miss Mason lays stress on the teaching and learning of English grammar at Scale How, where it is taken as a special subject.

*Against.*—Parsing is taught in Class II (Latin), and there is no occasion to teach the same thing in English.

What is the date of the oldest English grammar book? Would it not be found that a study of English grammar became necessary when Latin went out of fashion at the Reformation?

*For.*—In Class III English and Latin grammar are compared, and an added interest is given.

Parents often do not want girls to learn Latin, and they would argue the absurdity of teaching grammar through a language they do not want their children to study.

## DISCUSSION ON TEACHING THE HISTORY OF GRAMMAR.

A little history of the English language is taught in English history and geography, when every invasion of a new race means new place-names, etc. We want more definite history of grammar set to make the subject more interesting, but not more time given to the subject as a whole.

## DISCUSSION ON DR. GOW'S "METHOD OF ENGLISH."

*Against.*—The girls generally do not like it. It is complicated, and introduces many side issues.

*For.*—Those side issues are printed in small type, and can be left out if desired.

*Resolution.*—That we find it better to teach Latin and English grammar as at present set in the programme.

*Amendment and Resolution.*—That more history of the English language be given in Classes II and II.

*Question put to the meeting.*—Is Dr. Gow's *Method of English* a desirable book for work in Class III?

*General answer.*—No.

### WHETHER THE PAINTERS CHOSEN FOR PICTURE-TALK COULD FOLLOW EACH OTHER IN A MORE HARMONIOUS SEQUENCE THAN AT PRESENT.

Let us first consider the main objects of a picture-talk. Dr. Percy Dearmer tells us that "the magic," as we call it, of art is precisely its sacramentalism. That is, it reveals the eternal and invisible which always lies within the outward . . . and the gift of understanding is just that we can see the infinite in common things, . . . the picture must perish one day, but the beauty which it expressed can never die." Miss Mason tells us further, "That we must learn to discriminate between the meretricious and the essential, between the technique and the thing to be expressed." It is quite plain that the most important reason for our study of pictures is to see the beauty and to learn the truth told in a different way by every age and school of painting.

To enter into the spirit of a picture, and to know it we must, as it were, dissect it; we must know the history, literature, manners, and customs of the people and age, but this is too big a study for the schoolroom. Some of us, no doubt, do so know many of the great painters, but as teachers we must be content to stand aside; we love greatly, and surely our love and sympathy will inspire the children with love and appreciation, and by teaching them how to look and what to look for, by telling them the legends and

stories, we lay a sure foundation in every school and age that should open the door of desire for more knowledge, which will lead them to the delightful task of fuller discovery when school days are over. We see the heart and soul of things after much thought, our powers of insight are called forth, and imagination and sympathy must help. All these powers are capable of ranging over the world, they are independent of time and space, then why, when exercising them in this particular direction, should they be bound in any way? Considering the object of our lesson—is it necessary? We teach other subjects—such as history and mathematics—each in its proper scientific order, but in this subject, where it is possible, let us keep our liberty; give the children leave to wander in the garden of art—if there is a pathway leading through, let it be the knowledge of the teacher and the method born of the object in giving a picture-talk.

I think that if taken in any kind of settled order this subject would lose much of its charm. We should be in danger of the nature of our picture-talk degenerating, and our teaching might tend to emphasize the accidental truths, while the message, the soul, would fall into the background, and life, atmosphere, that delicate breath, would vanish. Ruskin warns us that "The trend of the modern critic is to explain the technical method rather than to treat of the of the essential soul." Also let us remember the untrained teachers, of whom, I suppose, there are many teaching in the P.U.S. I do not suggest that we are better than they, but we have had the advantage of Miss Mason's training, and we start with a knowledge of many of her thoughts and ideas which other people must discover by degrees. Do not let us put in their way a stumbling-block that might divert them from a more spiritual way into one of history and facts.

Another point I would emphasize concerns the age of children entering the P.U.S. No doubt many enter in Classes III or IV, and supposing of these a number work for a short time only, say two years, would it be better for them to know something of one master in each of six different schools of painting, or to know thoroughly two of the schools? We have had since Easter, 1912, Van Eyck (Flemish), Rembrandt (Dutch), Velasquez (Spanish), Carpaccio (Venetian), Watts (English), Dürer (German), but the painters might have been set to cover the same period in a more harmonious sequence, such as Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Botticelli in the Tuscan School, followed by Bellini, Titian, and Veronese in the Venetian School. The point at issue is whether those who had had glimpses of six schools would be more or less educated than those who had a fair knowledge of two schools. Also, is there nothing to be said of the delightful uncertainty of not knowing who comes next? Can any student say that her pupils are not always on the *qui vive* to know who is to be next term's painter? It is not a case of who follows, but who comes.

The desire for a more harmonious sequence having been felt, is there no way of providing a link and some form of order. For this purpose I have a chart which was suggested and copied from a similar one in *Schools of Painting*, by Mary Innes, and this I offer as a substitute for a more settled order in picture study. Here the schools and the centuries are indicated, and the life of each painter is shown by a red line in its proper age and school, and events that influenced thought and production are put in another space. I suggest that the framework of this chart be given to the children, and pasted in the end of their picture-talk book. In this book the pictures are placed in the order taken. At the first picture-talk of the term the new artist's life-line is put in its proper place, and then where and when he lived

and who were his contemporaries is seen at a glance. Thus supposing the children know something of Botticelli and Dürer is set, how interesting to discover that, though they lived far apart, they lived at the same time; also that Dürer knew Bellini in Venice—here are two links. Even more interesting would it be, knowing something of Velasquez, to meet some day his fellow-townsmen, Murillo, whose circumstances were so different, and to know that Velasquez helped him with knowledge and sympathy.

Many of our pupils will have opportunities of seeing the famous galleries. I hope and feel inclined to predict that those who have studied the pictures, keeping such a chart, will have learnt unconsciously something of the different schools, and will have enough love and knowledge to enable them to look intelligently, to learn much, and to go unerringly to the right pictures.

As to the advisability of making children do drawings of the picture set.

I understand that there is a feeling that children should not be asked to reproduce these great works of arts as a whole, as it might tend to diminish their appreciation of them, and also lessen their reverence for the minds that called them forth, though they might well be asked to study carefully some small detail, and draw that.

We all know how much Ruskin drew and copied, how he visited the haunts of the great painters and made drawings of them, and the more he knew, the more he corrected and revised his earlier works, and the greater his love and reverence became. "Morelli, the Italian critic, professed to be able to fix with accuracy the authorship of almost any picture, because his exact knowledge of details of drawing peculiar to each master revealed the author as clearly and certainly as though the name were writ large." We, and the children under our guidance, cannot surely do better

than to study in the same way; to give time for so much detail is not possible, but we should be able to make discovery to a certain extent possible to the pupil.

In order to know a picture we must study and narrate, and this narration takes the form of a drawing, which serves to fix the picture and its details firmly in our minds. No mere looking will fully unveil the inner meaning, we must learn the picture by heart, and hold it in our memory, that it may become a subject for contemplation and a joy; the more we ponder and discover, the greater will our love and reverence grow—and thus should it be with the children.

Sometimes the drawing is from memory, and sometimes it is done direct from the picture, whether of the whole or of a detail. I confess that I cannot see how either way of reproducing should tend to lessen reverence in any way, because it is, surely, impossible for the ordinary being to make a perfectly correct drawing from memory; it would be possible to copy perfectly, but who in the schoolroom could give the necessary time? We must decide according to the ability of our pupils, whether it be possible to attempt the whole, and through failure to realize something of the greatness of the master mind, or to take a part, and through the power to reproduce it truly draw nearer to the mind of the artist, and realize something of its beauty and strength; but always against this latter method must be placed the fact that details are apt to lose their meaning if taken from the whole, and that, however big and full of drawing a picture may be, its outline should always be suggested by a few lines as well as the more careful drawing of one or more details.

Lastly, let us face the question of lack of reverence for the master mind. We must be careful that when reproducing the children are full of the idea that they are only expressing what someone else has done, trying to discover

what the artist knew, they are not of themselves making a picture, but copying, and there is a vast difference between the two, the only similarity is that perfection is possible.

If children have studied and been able to understand a small or great part of the meaning of a picture, and know also something of the way in which the great painters worked, such as the fresco painters, and such masters of line as Botticelli, of light and colour as Titian, there must be very few who would not reverence the pictures, and through them, the creator; even more so if they realize the originality, the love and strength, the necessity of expressing a message which must be given to the world, regardless of difficulties, and is, in spite of almost grotesque drawing in some cases of earlier works.

Reverence is capable of growth. As I said before, it is after the picture is in our minds that it is possible to understand and appreciate more fully—then reverence will grow. We must remember this in dealing with children; they are so inexperienced and ignorant, even more so than we; how can they be expected to understand and value at once, though my own experience is that children are keenly aware of the atmosphere of a picture, especially if we refrain from speech. The object of our picture-talk is to strengthen their love and reverence of truth and beauty.

I quote from *Ourselves*: "It is not in a day or a year that Fra Angelico will tell us of the beauty of holiness, that Giotto will confide his interpretation of the meaning of life, that Millet will tell us of the simplicity and dignity that belong to labour on the soil, that Rembrandt will show us the sweetness of humanity in many a common-place countenance . . . the outward and visible sign is of less moment than the inward and spiritual. . . ."

EDITH FROST.

## DISCUSSION.

Several students thought it would be a pity to destroy the children's joyful anticipation of an entirely new and unknown artist, and one averred that as in the field of nature the children's joy in gathering and naming flowers would be spoilt by directions to classify, so the field of art would lose some of its attractiveness by following a rigid chronology.

It was thought the chart might be of use for older children in placing the period of the artist chosen, etc. One student found that charts had a great attraction for some children in Classes Ib and II, more even than for older children.

One student considered that reproducing pictures or their details increased reverence for the artist's work, and another found that, however feeble the attempts the children made, they appreciated the pictures all the more.

Miss Parish inquired whether it is the experience of teachers that children desire to know more details of the artists' lives as they grow older, and how lessons to older children are supplemented.

Several students reminded the meeting that Miss Mason attached great importance to the artist's life being subordinated to his work, and that interest in the picture was not necessarily the outcome of interest in the painter's life.

One student said that she considered it important that Class IV should be acquainted with the conditions of life at the time of painting in order to bring out the spirit of the age. She instanced the religious life that influenced the work of the Italian masters.

Another said that the spirit of the age was brought out in the subject, and the conditions of the life and history itself could be gleaned from the study of the picture, and another affirmed that more, indeed, could be learnt of the man and his times from the picture than from the study of the artist's

life, and cited Shakespeare as an example of a man being known through his works.

One student considered that there was a possibility of getting too literary an aspect of a picture, and another inquired if it would be lawful to point out the spirit of the picture to older children if it was not realized by them.

Miss Parish thought that if such was the case it plainly showed that the children were not yet ready for it, and that it is better to be content with just sowing seed, and that one may rest assured that anything so *living* is ultimately bound to bear fruit. She advised forcing nothing upon the children, but leaving them to take what they needed from the lessons.

The following resolution was put to the meeting, and carried:—"It is found most satisfactory to take picture-talks as at present set, to cover a wide field, with a possible addition of a chart in Classes II, III, and IV.

## MEMORY TRAINING.

Memory consists of two parts: (a) the power of *registering* words and ideas in the brain, and (b) the power of *retaining* and *recalling* them.

(a) The first part, that of registering words and ideas, depends entirely upon *attention*. Thus we may be present at a lecture and hear every word, and yet retain nothing, simply because the *attention* has not been engaged. Here we find ourselves on familiar ground.

(b) But this is not all: we want to be able to retain and recall at any time that which we have learned.

The difficulty we have in recalling certain words, facts, or ideas varies, as we know, very much. For example, a child misspells two words in dictation exercise, such as "actually" and "potato." These words, perhaps, are